

CLAIMS:

1. A method of making a material, said method comprising generating a foamed hydrophilic polymer solution and treating said foamed hydrophilic
5 polymer solution with sufficient energy and for a sufficiently short time that a polymer foam having an open-cell structure is formed.
2. A method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the hydrophilic polymer comprises gelatin or a derivative thereof.
- 10 3. A method as claimed in Claim 1 or Claim 2, wherein the step of treating the foamed hydrophilic polymer solution comprises exposing it to a source of microwave radiation.
- 15 4. A method as claimed in Claim 3, in which the step of treating the foamed hydrophilic polymer solution lasts for 5 minutes or less.
5. A method as claimed in Claim 4, in which the step of treating the foamed hydrophilic polymer solution lasts for 2 minutes or less.
- 20 6. A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the step of generating the foamed hydrophilic polymer solution comprises high-shear stirring of a hydrophilic polymer solution such that air is entrained in said hydrophilic polymer forming bubbles therein.
- 25 7. A method as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 5, wherein the step of generating the foamed hydrophilic polymer solution comprises adding a physical or chemical blowing agent to a solution of the hydrophilic polymer, and interacting with said blowing agent to cause it to decompose, thereby generating a
30 gas.

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8. A method as claimed in Claim 7, wherein the step of interacting with the blowing agent comprises heating the solution.
9. A method as claimed in Claim 7, wherein the step of interacting
5 with the blowing agent comprises adding an acid to said solution to react with the blowing agent, thereby generating gas.
10. A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, which further comprises the step of coating the foamed hydrophilic polymer solution
10 onto a support substrate to form a coated support substrate prior to the step of treating said foamed hydrophilic polymer solution to form the polymer foam.
11. A method as claimed in Claim 10, wherein the step of treating the foamed hydrophilic polymer solution results in drying the coated support
15 substrate.
12. A material obtainable by the method of any of Claims 1 to 11.
13. An ink-jet receiver comprising a material according to Claim 12.
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14. An ink-jet receiver, comprising a support and an ink-receiving layer on said support, said ink receiving layer comprising a hydrophilic polymer foam material obtainable by the method of any one of Claims 1 to 9.
- 25 15. Use of microwave radiation to form a polymeric foam material having an open-cell structure from a foamed hydrophilic polymer solution.